

The Tide of War

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Summary: Alagaesia has never seen a time as dark as this.

Galbatorix's private army, the Artisans, have launched a massive campaign against the new Alagaesia. All hope for the land is just about lost-of course, that's when the UNSC frigate Nighthawk crash-lands in the Spire.

1. Landing

****It didn't end with Galbatorix...****

After Galbatorix committed suicide, everybody, for some reason, thought it had all ended. But with a reign like his, there are no doubt ripples...

Galbatorix was training a group of assassins called the Artisans. They were all trained with the king's private dragons, and only four others knew of their existence. At the time of his death, there were fifty humans filled with magic and hatred, along with two thousand Elite Ra'zaac, and five hundred thousand soldiers. Two years later, they showed themselves.

It was the one of the bloodiest sieges in the history of Alagaesia. Two hundred Artisans attacked the town of Skeidr, on the outskirts of Alagaesia. The walls and guards were numerous, and were some of the best fortified in Alagaesia. The Artisans hurled fireball, lightning and explosions. The guards were disassembled as the walls were blown down, the buildings ransacked and captured, the flags burnt. This all happened within twelve hours, and the artisans only lost thirty-two men.

War ensued. Huge battles were fought, and many were killed. Our story begins with a certain patrol that was attacked, that had a certain rider in it, one who had never been meant to return to Alagaesia...

Prophecies don't all come true. Especially the one regarding Eragon

Shadeslayer. Although, now he wished it had as he dodged an explosive fireball from an Artisan. _Saphira, can we go any faster!? _ He thought as they swooped through the Spire, bolts of magic flying by._ I'm going as fast as I can! _She thought back. An Artisan jumped onto Saphira, his armored boots clinking on her scales. He ran at Eragon, his sword flashing in the light of the flames."Brisingr!" As he said it, the sword Eragon had crafted burst into blue flames. The Artisan paused, and suddenly had multiple ribs cracked as a stray tree branch caught him in the chest.

Saphira roared in pain as a bolt of lightning struck her wing. She crashed into a forest, sliding finally into a clearing. Eragon rolled beside her. He turned over and immediately had a sword at his throat. "Move, and I stab. That goes for the dragon, too."

They stared into each other's eyes. The Artisan's eyes were cold and filled with malice. His gaze was tempered with steel. "It is the heaven's decision tonight. Whether you live, or die. Gods, should he live, send me a sign within the next minute. If he should die...well, that's obvious. Starting now."

As the next thirty seconds passed, thick with tension, neither of the two noticed the yellowish glowing _thing_ falling from the sky. But Saphira did.

_Eragon, look up! _His gaze drifted upward, and so did the Artisans, as a giant object started entering the atmosphere. They all went into dragon vision and looked, and they stared at what they saw. Eragon voiced their thoughts.

"That's not a meteor..." he said warily.

No, it was not a meteor. It was the U.N.S.C. _Nighthawk,_ currently on a course for a crash-landing in the Spire. It had taken severe damage in battle, and was carrying a heavy load. Its maximum crew was current crew was 17.

"Lash! Start up the Falcon!" Drake yelled as he ran across the hangar. "What about the others?!" Lash yelled back as the propellers started rotating. "They're staying on ship. SLIVER said that there was 56.275% chance that the ship will survive impact into those mountains. Besides, I don't think Caboose and Griff will stop being complete asses long enough to realize that the ship's going down." He hopped into the right side gunner's seat. "I, however, don't like those odds. Liftoff now!"

The Artisans had a muzzle and chains on Saphira and Eragon as they flew back to Skeidr, now their strongest fortress. They were still wondering about what they had seen, and were still looking back at the thing as it crashed into the spire. Flames spread over the forests as the thing slid down the mountain, soon disappearing from view. They would have to tell their General about this.

The falcon landed in the clearing which the _Nighthawk_ had made. "You think they're ok?" Drake asked. As an answer, they heard over the radio. "Drake, Lash, get down here! We need to take inventory." As Jase spoke, they heard screaming and crashing in the background. "That's Griff and Caboose if I ever heard 'em." Lash said as the falcon began its descent.

Like it? Don't? R&R!

2. Bar Fight: Spartan Edition

****HOLD ON! HOLD THE FIRE AND BRIMSTONE!****

I know, readers, you're probably pretty PO'd at me for not updating any of my stories. For the past half a year. But I've been extremely busy with middle school. So, audience, I cry for your forgiveness. Also, a new WWKMH is coming out within the week, and I have no less than 7 other stories in progress. So, be prepared!

The falcon 360'd and landed next to the hangar doors. A red-armored man walked out, not looking happy. Actually, he looked positively furious.

"What's up with you two? Chickening out on us like that." he muttered angrily. "Well I'm SORRY that I don't want to die in a ship crash. If I'm gonna die, I want to die in battle." Drake snapped back. Under the green dome of his helmet, he rolled his eyes.

Jase, exasperated, hit his helmet with his hand. "God, you seriously tick me off sometimes. We need to check and see if everything's fine or not. Report the condition of the weapons, vehicles, and the systems. SLIVER will run diagnostics on everything. Now get your sorry rear ends moving before I have to move them for you!" he yelled.

Drake sighed-sometimes he just couldn't stand the first officer. This was just like that one time on Reach he activated the sticky grenade-while it was stuck to him- andâ€¦ Lash tugged his arm, snapping him out of his brief reverie.

"Come on Drake, we'd better get moving." With that, the armored ODS walked through the slightly busted hangar door.

Sighing, Drake trotted after him.

****Skeidr, 13:52****

The group of Artisans flew in through the door in the roof of the city hall, men bowing along the ground. Eragon looked down. Obviously, these were very elite Artisans-some of the best. They'd caught him, hadn't they?

They flew along, Saphira's chains rattling. Said chains had been torched repeatedly, but to no avail. The torching had been what caused the large bruise over his right eye, which was rapidly swelling up. Oh well, at least they'd tried.

Several of the Artisans were talking to one man in a large throne. It was obvious to Eragon that he was the leader-throne, all the people talking to him, the fact that two jet-black dragons were standing with spread wings behind him; he was behind this whole operation.

"Welcome, Shadeslayer." The man rumbled. "You are in the Artisans' custody now, and will be so for a very long time. You will be used as a bargaining chip, human shield, and possibly a weapon."

Eragon smiled and laughed hard into the air. In spite of the situation, or perhaps because of it, he retained his snarky sense of humor. "HA! What in the name of all that is holy do you think I am? A traitor?" The man eyed Eragon, raising his eyebrow. His mask of calm never slipped. "You will find we can be veryâ€¦persuasive, at times."

The Shadeslayer chuckled darkly. "Whatever you can do, I've been through worse- Shadeslayer guarantee." Eragon literately spat back. The saliva flew through the air into the face of the leader, who recoiled in shock and disgust. One of the Artisans kicked him in the stomach. Grimacing, he managed a smirk.

"Get him out of my sight." The leader growled through clenched teeth. "I don't see what the other side would ever want with you. ALL DISMISSED!" He yelled. He really needed some time alone. One of his best men walked up, pushing past the mob trying to get out of the room. He walked up to him. "My liege, the only reason he's still alive was a sign." The leader's eyebrows rose. "What kind of sign?" he asked, suddenly sounding different. Almostâ€¦fearful. "Well sirâ€¦it was from the heavens. It was like a meteoriteâ€¦but it wasn't. It was huge-it came from space. It crashed in the Spire. We have no idea what it was, but it definitely wasn't natural." The leader tapped his foot worriedly. "Interestingâ€¦you are dismissed." The troop turned and walked away with a hurried "Yessir!" The lord rested his head back and looked into the sky. "Cursed seerâ€¦probably just a coincidence. Probably." He said, drumming his fingers on the throne.

"Gauss cannon is slightly damaged, but still usable with some work on it!" Jase called from across the hangar. Ships, a Private First Class, nodded and wrote down something on a clipboard. "Scorpion tank is online and fully operational, along with the mongoose." Sergeant Jason "Black" Interel said as he checked the vehicles. Some heavy footsteps resounded throughout the hangar, drawing the attention of everyone as the ship's only Spartan, Fred "Grabber" Lack walked out in full armor, battle rifle slung across his back and pistols at his sides. "Heading out for reconnaissance. Gonna see if there's any sentient life with us on this planet." He said, mounting the mongoose. Revving the engine so as not to hear any protest, he honked three times and hit the gas, driving off into the forest. "Grabber, get back here, darnit!" Ships yelled, waving his clipboard. But he was already gone.

There was a nearby village, Grabber soon discovered. As he started to drive in, he saw the inhabitants. They were humans! How they got here, he would have to find that out later. Some locals dressed in olden clothes gave him awkward looks as he went by.

"Whoopsâ€¦different time period!" He said, and drove into a patch of bushes. Two minutes later he came back out. He still had his armor on, and taking it off was, to put it frankly, not an option, though he ruled to take off his helmet. He decided to see if there were any tailors around. It didn't take very long. "Clothes, clothes of the best kind! Better than anyone else in Carvahall! Get your finely made clothes here!" The vendor practically screamed. Not many people seemed to take his offer up-most seemed hurried or stressed. He ran across the street quickly, helmet tucked under his elbow, and stopped at the stall. "Hello sir. I would like to purchaseâ€¦" He stopped to think for a second. The salesman drummed his fingers on the wooden

desk excitedly. Grabber finally settled on a bounty. "20 cloaks, please." He said with a bit of uncertainty. The vendor laughed for a while, until he realized that the man in front of him wasn't joking. "Twenty? I suppose you have companions, then-and the correct payment, of course!" He smiled. "How many creds per cloak?" Grabber asked exasperatedly. The salesman raised his eyebrows. "Creds? I don't know what those are, but its thirteen bronze a cloak." He said. Grabber facewalled. "Crap! Different currency hereâ€¦" He muttered under his breath. His eyes lit up as he recalled an old fantasy story he had read. "How about someâ€¦silver?" He asked. God, he hoped those fantasy novels he'd read were accurate. The vendor nodded with a childlike excitement. "YES! I'L-I mean, yes. Silver will be an adequate payment method." He answered. Grabber nodded, took out his pistol, and shot four times. The shells fell onto the stall's top, clinking together. "Wha-"The man started. "It's a private little machine I own-it's called a gun. Now, the cloaks please?" He asked. The man shook his head and quickly nodded. "I'll get right on it. Unfortunately, I don't have your full order. Would you like one cloak now and then come back later for the rest?" He asked hopefully. Grabber nodded. "Yes, that will suit my team's purposes. Thank you." He said, taking the newly placed cloak and walking off.

Grabber admired the cloak as he walked. It was black and comfortable, yet hard at the same time. It had a design that made him slightly empowered, as if he were wearing the skin of a slain devil. "I don't know how they do it, but this planet's tailors are a whole darn lot better then Harvest's." He commented. Information was the next step. He decided to go to the best place for info-the village tavern. Upon arriving, he smiled at the scene. People gambled and laughed and drank to their heart's content, without a care in the world. He was reminded of the last time he had seen such a happy sight-in the garrison, right before-

He shuddered. The Battle of the Ark. Faint memories came back to him-gunfire, screaming, the flash of energy swords whipping through the air, the bodies flying from a gravity hammer strike, the crashing shi-

_ Stop! _He thought to himself. _Just don't think about it._ His thought train continued. Pushing the memories of the violent battle out of his head, he took a table in the middle. In his experience 95% of the time the middle was the rowdiest point in the entire tavern based on the high seating rates, and therefore the high serving rates. He sat down at a table that three men were already seated at. They were laughing and telling bawdy jokes to each other, laughing at each one like it was the best joke they'd ever heard. Obviously drunkards. That was a good thing for him-much less wary and suspicious. One of them picked up his tankard, bringing it to his mouth at a speed which much of it sloshed onto Grabber. "Foul drunkard." He said quietly. The man stopped drinking and narrowed his eyes at Grabber. "Whatcha sayin' ta me?" His distorted words came out. Grabber looked up at the man. He was large and burly, ale dripping from his mouth. Judging by his looks this was a working man on his daily routine. Most likely eat, work, eat, work, eat, drink, go home, sleep, repeat. Picking a fight would most likely not be advantageous. "I said I'd had a hard day. Why do you ask?" He responded. The man seemed satisfied with that answer and went back to talking with his friends. Grabber sighed and decided to head to another table. Standing up slowly so as not to expose his armor, he turned to the left and walked at the same pace to another table with

two men at it. These men were not drunk, yet chatting. Slowly sitting down a bit down the bench from them, he listened in on their conversation. "-fact is, they're getting stronger by the minute! The king's forces are rapidly dwindling as we speak. They just can't match up to the Artisans, and if it continues like this it's going to be Galbatorix all over again. I don't know about you and your family but I like the lack of conscriptions and overtaxing his reign brought along. I'm hoping that the wave of dragon riders they called over from the fa-" The man stopped with a splutter as a sword found itself inches away from his throat. "So that's their little plan now, is it? Shouldn't have let your lips get loose." The sword wielder spoke harshly as he faced the offender. The whole tavern had eerily quieted down as the events unfolded, and Grabber could see the heads from the bar to the corner turned towards them. The terrified man stammered out a reply. "W-w-what are you talking about? I don't know anything!" The standing man raised his eyebrows. "Oh really? As an _Artisan," _He said, pronouncing the word loudly, "I'm trained to detect lies. And you show all the signs. King's spy, you're coming with me." The sitting man quivered under the stander's gaze, looking up in fear. The stander's cold smirk quickly vanished as a groan escaped his lips. "One of the Master's great regentsâ€and you didn't use your senses to detect my friend's crossbow?" The spy said as the Artisan in front of him staggered. Grabber felt no sorrow for the man as he keeled over, dead. As he thought it, the two men faced him. "I sincerely hope you're a bystander, else I'll have to kill you. Letharx, please shoot the other two regents trying to inconspicuously pull out their bows." The spy addressed the other man. Letharx stood up, pulling two small crossbows out from under the table, and released two darts at the corner. They whistled through the air, their flight ending with a _thwack_ as they landed in the chests of two men. They fell backwards onto the seating bench, as if they were merely sitting down. As they fell the kitchen door burst open, hooded men rushing in. Letharx reloaded one of his crossbows before an arrow found its way into his abdomen. "Over here!" One of the men yelled, pointing to their table. The spy grabbed his fallen friend's crossbow and released it into the shouter's forehead within an instant. He ducked under the table in an attempt to hide from the arrows screaming through the air. They whistled past his chair and nearly hit Grabber. "Civilian fire!" He shouted as he leapt over the table to dodge an arrow. "A likely story!" One of them yelled as he pointed his finger at Grabber. "_Deyja!_" He yelled as a purple bolt of energy soared out through his outstretched finger. Grabber instinctively ducked, the energy bolt soaring over his head. Squatting under the table, he saw the Artisans moving in to kill the pair of them. "I have had _E-FRIGGIN-_*_NOUGH_*_of these guys!" He yelled, putting his hands under the table and flipping it into the oncoming Artisans. Two managed to get out of the way before the table hit the group, splinters flying everywhere. Grabber pulled his gun and shot a throwing knife clean out of the air. He then shot the man who had thrown it, swiveling on his heel toward the other survivor. An arrow was already away, headed directly toward his face. The spy stood up and yelled "Brisingr!" Before his eyes the arrow burst into flames. He then shot the Artisan three times in the chest, the loud noise of each shot echoing through the otherwise silent tavern. The man fell to the ground, dead. The spy turned to face Grabber. "I don't know who-or what-you are, but I think it would be a mutual gain if we were to help each other get out of here." Grabber nodded. "Agreed. We'd better hurry, along then." He said as he walked towards the door. The spy jogged to keep up with his pace. "We'd best not just stride right out of here. The village guard will come any time

now." The spy informed him. Grabber absentmindedly nodded as he strolled out the door. He heard a TWANG as a bowstring was released and immediately ducked, an arrow lodging itself in the doorframe where his head was. "Good idea!" Grabber shouted as he jumped backwards. The spy scurried towards the other side of the tavern. He skidded to a stop in front of the bar. "Are there any back doors or side exits we could use?" He quickly asked. The bartender nodded and pointed them to a door directly to his back. "Take that, and then go out the door on the left. Good luck!" He responded, nodding in respect as the spy ran past him. Grabber followed his lead and sprinted through the door. It swung closed just as armed men burst in through the front door. "Where are they?!" The lead man screamed at the patrons. All were silent except for the local tax collector. The Artisans' takeover was a miracle for him, and he had a certain loyalty to them that large amounts of money often brought. He pointed towards the back door. "They went that way. Take the left door and you can probably catch them. Quickly now!" He instructed the Artisans, who wasted no time in vaulting or running through the staff door on the bar and going through the back door with such force it was ripped off its hinges. Heavy weighted, armored and muscled men tend to have quite a bit of push behind them. They ran past the food, knocking over a shelf in their haste to get to the escaped assassins.

Grabber and the spy hurried out in front of the tavern. Grabber took a turn right down the dirt road and started running that way. "Where are we going?" The spy asked, sprinting just to keep up. "To my vehicle. Just keep up and we'll be alright!" He replied. As he said it a ball of fire exploded right next to them. "Then again, alright is a relative term!"

Thank you for reading. Please tell me if it's beautiful writing, or it's a dirty piece of \$h!t. Also, feel free to point out plotheoles so I can fix them with my magical sonic screwdriver. =D

End
file.